(b) Archaeological Survey of India undertakes day-to-day maintenance of these monuments which include structural repairs, scientific preservation, provision of tourist facilities and environmental development. In addition the Archaeological Survey of India also undertakes special repairs wherever necessary.

(c) Archaeological Survey of India has earmarked Rs. 357 lakhs under plan and Rs. 415 lakhs under non-plan for implementation of the conservation programme during (2005-06) for the monuments in Maharashtra.

Upkeep of Building of Historical Interest

†3248. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received proposals from the foreign countries for the upkeep of buildings/places of historical importance;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of countries with whom talks have been held in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Proposals have been received from Japan, Italy, Belgium and World Monument Fund for conservation of some monuments of historical importance. The monuments identified for conservation under these proposals are Buddhist sites at Sanchi & Satdhara in MP, Ajanta-Ellora, Piltalkhora, Aurangabad Caves, Daultabad Fort and Bibi-Ka-Maqbara in Maharashtra, Tipu Sultan's Palace and monuments at Hampi in Karnataka and Jaisalmer Fort in Rajasthan.

Leaning Towers of the Taj Mahal

3249. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the leaning towers of the Taj Mahal at Agra;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the steps being taken to prevent any mishap or collapse of the towers and to make the Taj more tourist friendly; and

(c) the steps taken so far to cleanse the environment around the Taj and to protect the monument against dense chemical fumes emitted by the metal casting factories and other air polluting units?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Survey of India has carried out periodical surveys to check verticality of the four minarets of Taj Mahal since 1941 and recently Geodetic and Research Branch of Survey of India has carried out studies and observations of verticality of minarets in March 2005. Their report is awaited.

From the triangulatton, traverse and leveling data, Survey of India has concluded that the dome and four minarets of Taj Mahal remained quite stable in plan as well as in elevation from 1940 to 1994.

Under the NCF project steps have been initiated to facilitate smooth tourist flow. Besides the signages and other visitor amenities are being provided to make the Taj more tourist friendly. In addition the night viewing on full moon nights has been introduced.

(c) As per the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court, measures like shifting of polluting units and industries have been taken in the past. More recent measures include development of a green belt in the vicinity of Taj Mahal which will improve the ambience and contain the level of pollutions. This work is in progress.

Besides the Archaeological Survey of India and the Central Pollution Control Board are constantly monitoring the level of air pollutants to keep a watch on the ambient air quality.

Development of Ancient Cultures

3250. SHRI T.T.V. DHINKARAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of schemes implemented by Government for developing and preserving the ancient cultures of the country;

(b) whether Government have launched any scheme/project for promotion of the culture of minorities living in Delhi; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?